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THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

ON EARTH PEACE. . . NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE.

NEW SERIES.

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1869.

No. 12

PEACE AND THE PULPIT.

OR PEACE AUXILIARY TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

The object of the Christian ministry is no less than the salvation of the whole world. Our Saviour's last command requires them to evangelize all nations; this commission can be perfectly fulfilled only by bringing every dweller on earth under the saving power of his gospel; and whatever promotes the purification of his church, the spread of his truth, or the conversion of men in either Christian or pagan lands, is a handmaid to their sacred work.

Such an auxiliary is the cause of Peace. It would exert a benign influence on ministers themselves. Its spirit would improve their character, and greatly increase their usefulness. A temper, too nearly allied to that which kindles the strife of nations, has in almost every age wasted no small part of their energies in mutual conflict. The spirit of peace, constantly pervading them all, would have doubled, if not quadrupled, their success in winning souls to Christ.

A similar effect it would produce on private Christians. It would elevate their entire character, and qualify them to become far more successful co-workers with God in the salvation of mankind. It would heal open dissensions, allay secret animosities, and thus prepare many a church, long barren and desolate, for precious seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The war-spirit in Christians has sadly marred their character, grieved away the spirit of God, and probably destroyed more than half their capacity of usefulness to the souls of men.

Glance at the opposition of war to the work of salvation in Christian lands. It turns attention away from the concerns of the soul. It disqualifies men for a saving reception of the gospel. It opposes a thousand obstacles or neutralizing influences. It generates ignorance and infidelity. It occasions a general disregard and contempt of all religion. It is a vast hot-bed of intemperance. It reeks with the foulest licentiousness. It multiplies every species of vice and crime.

War, also, withholds the means of grace. The millions of standing warriors now in Christendom it deprives even in peace of nearly all religious privileges. War itself has no care or thought for their souls. It gives them no Bible; allows them no Sabbath; provides for them no sanctuary; nor does it even insure to them the rights of conscience. It treats them very much as so many brutes or machines.

War tends, likewise, to destroy the efficacy of the best means of grace. It blinds or steels mankind against their power. It debases the understanding, and sears the conscience, and turns the heart into flint, and hardens the whole soul against the truth and Spirit of God. Could you, with any hope of success, preach the gospel to men all ablaze with the passions of war? As well might you think of reaping a harvest from seed sown upon an ocean of fire.

War is the work of demons incarnate; a battle is a temporary hell; and could you make the whole earth one vast battle-field, it would thus become an outer court, a portico to perdition. Kindle the war-flame in every bosom; and from that moment must the work of salvation cease everywhere; nor ever could it begin again, till those fires were more or less quenched.

The case is plain. Does not war engross and exasperate the public mind? Are not its fleets and armies so many caldrons of wrath boiling with animosity, malice and revenge? Does it not cover the land with a sort of moral malaria infecting more or less the life-blood of almost every soul? Does it not pour over empires a gulf-stream of the foulest vices, and the fiercest passions? Does it not accumulate a mass of abominations that drive the Holy Spirit from his work of renewing and sanctifying the hearts of men? Let the war-cry ring from Maine to Florida, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; let the bitter, reckless strife of war-parties divide, exasperate and convulse this whole nation; let the war-spirit pervade our halls of legislation, and our seminaries of learning, every church and family, every pulpit, periodical and newspaper; let recruiting rendezvous in every considerable town, and encampments of soldiers in every section, and war-ships anchored in our harbors, and armies marching in every direction through the country, and battle-fires lighted among our hills and valleys, and every mail filled with news of victory or defeat, conspire to keep the public mind continually stretched to its utmost tether of interest in the progress of the war; and how soon would the Spirit of God fly from such "realms of noise and strife," to return no more for years!

The history of Christendom furnishes ample, humiliating proof of these positions. The wars of the Reformation, destroying no less than thirty millions of lives, put a stop to the progress of that glorious reform which Luther had so nobly begun. A like result followed more or less the religious wars in England and Scotland. The blessed revivals in our own country, commencing in 1739 under the labors of Whitefield, came to an end at the outbreaking of the first French war in 1744; and from that time till long after the close of our revolutionary contest, those heaven-sent refreshings were, "like angel visits, few and far between." The degeneracy of New England, greatly accelerated by those wars, has continued to this day; and never till the millennium will even the land of the Pilgrims regain those moral and religious habits which she had in the halcyon days of her forefathers.

Scarcely less fatal is war to the spread of Christianity. It exhausts the resources of the church; and already has she lost in this way a far greater amount of treasure and of blood than would have been requisite under God for the world's conversion. The war-system of Christendom absorbs even in a time of peace \$2,000,000,000 every year. In our war with the Seminoles, every Indian, killed or cap-

tured, must have cost us an average of ten or fifteen thousand dollars. Our revolutionary war required on both sides an expenditure of not less than \$1,000,000,000; the incidental losses must have been still greater; yet, if only equal, the bare interest at five per cent. on the aggregate would bring an annual income of \$50,000,000, one-half, perhaps one-third, of which would sustain all the thirty thousand missionaries necessary, according to the estimate of Gordon Hall, to evangelize the world. Our contest for independence sacrificed 300,000 lives; the wars of Napoleon, more than 5,000,000; all the wars consequent on the French Revolution not less than 9,000,000. How small a fraction of such sacrifices of life would be demanded, in the work of preaching the gospel to every creature!

Glance at the effect of this custom among ourselves on the heathen. It has filled them with prejudices well nigh invincible. They have got their views of Christianity, not from her Bible, not from her missionaries, not from any of her real votaries, but from the history of Christendom written in blood, or from fleets and armies sent under Christian banners to burn their villages, plunder their cities and ravage whole empires with fire and sword. They regard Christianity as a religion of blood, and its followers as aiming solely at conquest, plunder and power. Its pretensions of peace they spurn as base, arrant hypocrisy. Its name rings in their ear as the knell of their own ruin. They hate it, they scorn it, they dread it, they arm themselves against it; all because the wars of Christendom have belied its real character. All other causes put together, except depravity, have scarcely thrown so many obstacles in the way of evangelizing the world; and never, till this chief obstruction is removed, can you construct a great moral railway on which the car of salvation shall roll in triumph over the whole earth.

There is no end to considerations like these; but we cannot pause here to show you how far the practice of war is now crippling the moral energies of the church; — how it debases her character in the sight of man and of God; — how it hangs upon her bosom like a mammoth incubus; — how many ages it has already put back the promised day of a world's salvation: — or how impossible it will be, so long as it is tolerated among Christians, for the millennium ever to come.

Now, if there is any truth in these statements, is it not high time for the ministers of Christ to bestir themselves in earnest on this long-neglected, momentous subject? Charged with the care of souls, will they not set themselves in every possible way against such a wholesale destroyer of mankind for eternity? Sent forth on the god-like enterprise of bringing all nations back to holiness and heaven, can they overlook the claims of a cause so closely linked, so completely identified with the salvation of our world?

DR. BOGUE'S APPEAL TO PREACHERS.—If peace be the doctrine of the New Testament, how much is it to be lamented, that multitudes who profess to be Christians, are opposed to it both in sentiment and practice. But what is still more to be bewailed, ministers of Christ, who ought to be patterns of peace and love, have drunk into the spirit of war. They pray to God for victory over their country's enemies; they give him thanks when ten or twenty thousand of their foes are slain; and in their discourses to their flocks, they endeavor to inspirit them to battle and to bloodshed. How displeasing to God must such conduct be! How greatly is he dishonored by it!

We have reason to bless God, that the number of those Christians who perceive and feel their obligation to seek

the peace of nations, is increasing from day to day. In the first ages of the church, there were those who understood this to be the doctrine of the Gospel. But the Reformation also had its advocates. Since that time, none have been so faithful witnesses to the pacific spirit of the religion of Jesus; as the Quakers; but of late it has been embraced by considerable numbers among every sect. All the disciples of Christ should imbibe the spirit of peace; and above all should his ministers be men of peace, and advocates for the peace of the world. If we seek to inflame the malevolent passions of the soul, who shall be found to cool them? O that those who preach the gospel would lift up their voice like a trumpet, and proclaim that the religion of the New Testament is a religion of peace, and that for the blood of every man slain in war, God will demand an account from the rulers of nations.

Oh! if all the ministers of the globe would unite in this labor of love, and work of peace, what wonders might be done! What an amazing change for the better would be produced! Shall I bring arguments to convince, or motives to induce you to lift up your voice for the peace of the world? I will not. If you refuse your aid, go, strip yourselves of the robes of office, depart and officiate at the altar of some savage idol who delights in slaughter and blood. But why do I thus speak? Surely none of you, my brethren, will refuse to come forth against so mighty a foe of human happiness.

A SWEEPING CONDEMNATION OF WAR.—I cannot, says Chalmers, set before you a vivid picture of the miseries which war carries in its train—how it desolates every country through which it rolls, and spreads violation and alarm among its villages—how, at its approach, every home pours forth its trembling fugitives—how all the rights of property, and all the provisions of justice must give way before its devouring exactions—how, when Sabbath comes, no Sabbath charm comes along with it, and for the sound of the church bell which wont to spread its music over some fine landscape of nature, and summon rustic worshippers to the house of prayer, nothing is heard but the deathful volleys of the battle, and the maddening outcry of infuriated men—how, as the fruit of victory, an unprincipled licentiousness which no discipline can restrain, is suffered to walk at large among the people, and all that is pure, and reverend, and holy in the virtue of families, is cruelly trampled on, and held in the bitterest derision.

ERASMUS, 1573.—How absurd is it that they should be constantly at war with each other, who form but one family, the Church of Christ; who are members of the same body, and boast of the same head, even Jesus Christ; who have one Father in heaven, common to them all; who grow in grace by the same spirit; who are initiated in the same mysteries, redeemed by the same blood, regenerated at the same font, nourished by the same Holy Spirit, militate under the same great Captain of Salvation, eat the same bread, partake of the same cup, have one common enemy, and are all called to the same eternal inheritance.

JEREMY BENTHAM says, "Nothing can be worse than the general feeling on the subject of war. The church, the state, the ruling few, the subject many, all in this case seem to have combined to patronize vice and crime in their widest sphere of evil."